DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 079 425 TM 003 029

TITLE	A Manual for Teachers to Aid the Understanding and Implementation of Statewide Evaluation.
INSTITUTION	New Mexico State Dept. of Education, Santa Fe.
PUB DATE	73
NOTE	20p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Decision Making; Educational Objectives; *Guides; *Norm Referenced Tests; *Program Evaluation; *State Programs; Teaching Guides; Test Results; Tests
IDENTIFIERS	New Mexico

ABSTRACT

A manual is presented to familiarize the teacher with the two major components of the New Mexico evaluation effort: (1) the objective-based procedure and the tests used to measure a school and district's progress toward those objectives, and (2) the statewide testing program which utilizes norm-referenced tests and provides both individual and group information. (Author/CK)

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A MANUAL FOR TEACHERS TO AID THE UNDERSTANDING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STATEWIDE EVALUATION

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NEW MEXICO STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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P R E F A C E

Educational accountability has in recent years become a commonly used term that has seemingly spurred educators to attempt a variety of methods for informing the public of the status and effectiveness of programs as well as to provide a foundation on which to base proposals for program changes. To satisfy the demands by educators, legislators, and the general public, statewide evaluation programs have been initiated in several states.

In New Mexico, the Department's commitment to the development and implementation of an effective statewide evaluation program by May 1973 has been stated by Superintendent De Layo to committees of the legislature and to various groups of educators.

The concepts of evaluation and accountability are not new either in business or in education. The practices currently advocated differ from some used in the past perhaps only in the universality of their advocacy and in the insistence from state level public officials that educators at the local level use the results of evaluation data to assess program strengths and weaknesses, to aid in the counseling of individual students whenever possible, and to provide a reliable basis on which to base program revisions.

This manual is intended to familiarize you with the two (2) major components of the New Mexico evaluation effort: (1) the objective-based procedure and the tests used to measure a school and district's progress toward those objectives, and (2) the statewide testing program which utilizes norm-referenced tests and provides both individual and group information.

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PHILOSOPHY - TESTS
EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT UNIT
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

It is the belief of the State Department of Education that tests provide general indicators of student performance, and thereby should be regarded as a tool in decision-making. Such factors as appropriateness of the test, and the intended uses of test results provide primary criteria for test selection in New Mexico's statewide evaluation program. In New Mexico, specific instruments have been chosen to provide the best information possible on student performance individually, and by group. As needs change, educators must be prepared to utilize new measures to meet those needs. Further, tests should not dictate the curriculum. Rather, whatever measurement device is chosen, it should be based upon skills and measures representative of the curriculum being utilized.

Many decision-makers consider test results: students, parents, teachers, and state and local officials. Thereby, these decision-makers should be aware of the limitations and strengths of test scores. Test results should be considered within the framework of local curriculum, population, variances in learner experiences, and appropriateness of reporting form. This is not to say that test results are inadequate performance indicators but merely that test results should be considered in relation to their intended purposes.

It is not the sole desire of the State Department of Education that students make good scores, rather that educators develop and implement better educational programs based upon all available indices.

Often, evaluation is used synonymously, though mistakenly, with statewide testing. It is the purpose of the Evaluation and Assessment Unit in the State Department of Eduation to provide information for decision-making at all levels. The evaluation of any product or service should not rest solely upon test results, nor should an evaluation design be based in total upon indicators independent of considerations of the performance of that product or service. In short, the Evaluation and Assessment Unit provides information for program assessment. Program assessment explicitly does not mean punishing children by cutting programs on the primary basis of test results. Program assessment, including consideration of tests as indicators, is an important avenue of pursuit in upgrading the quality of educational programs for the children of our State.

Alan D. Morgan, Director
Evaluation and Assessment Unit
New Mexico State Department
of Education

NEW MEXICO EDUCATIONAL EVALUATION: 1969 TO CURRENT:

In 1969 a concern was expressed in the New Mexico State Legislature that the Department of Education should strive to improve its procedures to bring about more efficient evaluation of school programs. That same year the legislature passed Senate Bill I which mandated that one-third (1/3) of the schools in New Mexico would be evaluated each year.

In June of 1970, an objective-based evaluation system was adopted. During 1970, objective-writing workshops were held, and 27 school districts wrote objectives for their districts. These objectives were found to constitute basic skills in four (4) areas: Mathematics, Science, Communication Skills, and Social Studies. No tests were administered the first year.

The second year 32 school districts were added, bringing the total districts involved to 59. The 59 school districts were given an opportunity to add to the objective bank and asked to rate the objective for their local district according to their local priorities. Tests were constructed, and administered to these 59 school districts in May, 1972.

The objective-based evaluation system provided that a locally chosen committee in each district would select objectives from existing banks in each of the four skill areas and rank them

according to their local priorities. If the existing objective bank lacked a specific objective perceived to be important in the local district, it could be added to the bank. Objectives helped specify the student outcomes a district wished to achieve. Thus, the objective selection provided us with a way in which to identify what was considered important by a local district so that its schools could assess the attainment of objectives they gave the greatest priority.

It is intended that the objective bank be up-dated or revised whenever necessary to broaden and clarify its contents within the basic skill areas of the program.

Tests were developed for the most frequently chosen objectives and were field-tested in May of 1972 in 59 districts. The data from this testing has been analyzed. The central feature of this analysis provides an index of how well a school district is doing in meeting its objectives relative to the expected achievement. The expected achievement is generated on the basis of previous achievement scores. Thus, the results of the objective-based tests were reported in terms of whether the district is performing below, at, or above its expected level.

During the spring and summer of 1972, the department worked on developing objectives for a fifth area; namely, career education.

A set of objectives was developed and rated this past fall, in addition to the other four (4) basic skill areas, by districts who entered the objective-based program for the first time this year. The two-thirds (2/3) of New Mexico's districts which previously ranked objectives had the option to re-rank objectives this past fall if they chose to do so.

All eighty-eight (88) districts will be involved in the objective-based testing program at grades 6, 9, and 12. Results will be reported as previously discussed, with the additional availability of information by school.

An additional component of the current Evaluation and Assessment Unit is the standardized testing program. This program provides data about how well schools and students are doing in achieving basic skills and knowledge. Children in grades 1, 5, and 8 are tested with standardized measures dealing with educational objectives that are of statewide concern and national concern (as distinguished from local concern). These tests provide information about student performance in general academic ability at grade 1, and reading, language, arithmetic, and study skills at grades 5 and 8.

UTILIZATION OF DATA:

The scores on the objective-based tests are intended to be used as gross indicators of average student performance for the purpose of program assessment. With the scores furnished by the testing program, each district will be provided an indication as to its current level in the tested areas; that is, below, at, or above expected performance.

If a district is above its expected level in a given area, the program may be further reviewed for consideration as an exemplary program, as such a program might be helpful for other schools. A district that scores below its expected level may receive help in the form of suggested exemplary programs, additional services from a specialist in the area, and possibly by continued or increased financial support.

In New Mexico, investigation of competency-based certification has been an outgrowth of educational developments and concerns in the state during recent years. These developments have come in the areas of educational finance, accountability, evaluation, and research on the correlations between teacher education and student achievement.

Evaluation of student achievement and program effectiveness in New Mexico schools has evolved into a statewide program of evaluation and assessment. These could lead to the development of

some form of competency-based certification for those of us involved in education.

It is generally felt that under the current method of evaluation, competency has been difficult to measure or define. Therefore, a new method may need to be developed which is equitable for teachers, administrators, the state, and particularly for the children of New Mexico.

Teachers are concerned about the proposal of competency-based evaluation. They are also concerned that some equitable and effective method be developed to enable the state and the local school administration to accurately measure the effectiveness of a teacher. They also are concerned that some method be developed which will enable them to know exactly what is expected of them in the classroom.

With these concerns in mind, State Superintendent De Layo in 1972 appointed a three-member task force from the State Department of Education to investigate the concept of competency-based certification. This task force has provisions for interaction with teacher-representative organizations.

At this point, may it suffice to say that the New Mexico State Department of Education is continuing an investigation of competency-based teacher certification. At the time of this

writing, the New Mexico State Department of Education has adopted no official plan that meets the needs of all concerned. A written progress report on the activities of the task force is available through the New Mexico State Department of Education.

The State Department of Education is working extensively with staff members and school officials to refine our procedures for the uses of the data from the statewide testing program, school visitations, and the objective-based evaluation effort. The intended uses of the test results for any measure is the real key to the value of that test. The objective-based testing you are participating in is designed for program assessment. This information can be most beneficial if it is used by teachers, principals, and curriculum planners as an indicator of student performance and program effectiveness.

DIRECTIONS FOR TEST ADMINISTRATION

Testing will be done in grades 6, 9, ard 12 during March of 1973 in five areas. These areas are math, science, social studies, communication skills, and career education. The individual tests will be multiple choice, with 20-25 items each.

Career education will be included for the first time this year as field tests in grades 6, 9, and 12. A decision to test grade 6 was made to facilitate the State Board of Education mandated career education courses which are required to be part of the curriculum in grades K-6 by July 1, 1973.

In order to allow those who will be test administrators to familiarize themselves with the directions for the objective-based testing, a sample is included in this manual.

The test directions received with the tests in March - April may differ slightly, depending upon the particular test being administered. For example, the oral comprehension test directions differ slightly, in that they require the reading of passages by the test administrator. For the oral comprehension test (Test #7), the test administrator should have read the passages and become familiar with them prior to the administration of the test itself. Therefore, the administrator may want to give several of the other tests prior to this particular one, so that he or she may read through the passages at least once before giving the test.

In the test directions you will note the request for students to fill in an indication of their ethnicity. This request is made in order for the test designers to gather information on item and test qualities which may hamper the accurate assessment of the skills of students of varying backgrounds and experiences. It is intended to be to the advantage of the various ethnic groups to be able to ensure the "fairness" of each item to all students. As we continue to identify specific learning problems, methods of alleviating those problems can be developed and initiated. Continued monitoring is needed to assure that methods are effective.

In the event a student feels uncomfortable completing this section of the answer sheet, it is not mandatory for him to mark in this section.

We suggest you, as a test administrator, encourage students to check their responses again if additional time remains in the testing period. Some tests may not require all of the allotted time for all students to finish and check their responses. Therefore, as soon as all students complete the test they are working on, you may wish to proceed with the next test.

BREAKS IN TESTING SESSIONS:

It is recommended that all students be given a three to five minute break after the completion of each test. Test administrators in grade 6 may wish to allow a longer break. It is suggested that

students remain in the classroom during the testing sessions. The teacher should use her/his discretion in allowing students to leave the room.

MACHINE SCORED ANSWER SHEETS:

Because of the limited skills covered by each 20 item test and the small amount of time required to take each test, it is possible that a number of students in your district will be taking up to five tests. You will notice each machine scored answer sheet has provisions for the answers to only three tests. Students taking more than three tests will need to be given a second answer sheet.

Answer sheets will be machine scored this year to provide for the return of test scores as early as possible. Because the optical scanner may read peripheral marks as wrong answers, we are asking test administrators to check that all answer sheets returned to them are marked only in the intended spaces. It is essential that all marks on the student information and test item response sections completely fill the small boxes.

(S A M P L E)

DIRECTIONS FOR ADMINISTERING TEST #____

Prior to Testing:

____ 1. Administrator should have a clock or a watch to insure proper timing.

____ 2. Administrator should have extra sharpened pencils with erasers. The answer sheets will be machine scored, therefore, please specify number 2 pencils.

____ 3. Administrator should count the number of test booklets for his group to insure that there are enough for all students, plus a few extras in case of defective booklets.

____ 4. Arrange the room in a way to discourage students' looking at one anothers' papers.

____ 5. Schedule the testing to avoid conflicts. If possible, put a sign on the door reading: "TESTING, PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB."

____ 6. Notify students in advance to bring a sharpened number 2 pencil and an eraser.

Begin the Session:

When the students are seated and desks cleared except for pencils and erasers, pass out the answer forms (one per student).

When the answer forms have been distributed, say:

"Please print your name clearly in the space provided for this purpose at the top of the answer sheet. Put your last name first. . .

Fill in the school name and code number which is _____.

Mark the correct space to indicate whether you are a male (M), or a female (F).

Also mark the box or boxes indicating your ethnic group.

Mark the correct space to show whether you are in grade 6, 9, or 12.

When I distribute the tests to you, place them face up on your desk. Please do not turn the page."

Distribute the tests yourself. Do not have the students do this. When all the tests are distributed, say:

> *"Look at the number in the upper-right-hand corner of your test booklet. On your answer sheet under the column labeled "Test Number", mark the box to indicate which test you are taking."*

Walk around the class to check that the students have filled in the necessary information, then read the following:

> *"This test is designed to measure some basic skills. Most of you will find the questions to be rather easy. You may finish this test in less time than is allowed.*
>
> *When I tell you to begin, mark the answer to each question by filling in completely the space between the lines for your choice on the answer sheet provided. Please mark all your choices on this answer sheet and <u>not</u> in your test booklet.*
>
> *Mark only one choice for each question. If you change your mind after marking a choice, erase completely the wrong choice and fill in the space for the one you want.*
>
> *If you are not sure of the answer to a question, guess. Do not spend too much time in trying to answer any one question.*
>
> *If you have a problem during the test, please raise your hand and I will come to you, but I will not help you try to interpret a question or an answer.*
>
> *If you finish the test before the time is up go back and check that you have filled in an answer for each question on the test. Please be courteous to those who have not finished by being quiet and remaining seated.*
>
> *You will have ____ minutes to finish this test, now open your test booklet and begin."*

Note the time the testing begins in the box below:

*Time began*_____

During testing, walk around the room and check the following:

1. Students are filling completely their choices to each question, but only one choice per question.

2. Students have filled in their names and other requested information on their answer sheets.

Please record any irregularities which occur while testing (such as improper timing, interruptions, etc.) on the sheet provided for this.

If it is clearly apparent that all students have finished the test before the time is up, you may end the test session at that point.

You do not need to announce how much time is left during the test, but if a student asks, you should let him know.

END OF THE TEST SESSION:

At the end of ____ minutes, say:

> *"Please stop. Even if you have not finished, put your pencils down and close your test booklets. Put your answer sheet on top of the booklet so that I can collect them both."*

Note in the box the time you stopped the test.

Time ended _____

Collect the test booklets and answer sheets yourself from each student. Check to be sure the students have:

1. put their name on the answer sheet.

2. marked one answer for each question.

3. handed you both an answer sheet and a test booklet.

Place the test booklets in one stack with the completed irregularity form on top, then place the answer sheets in another stack. Place all of this material in the envelope provided, and return this envelope to your test coordinator.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

IRREGULARITY FORM FOR TEST #_____

Test Administrator's Name: _____
Last First Middle

Testing Location: _____ _____ _____
Room # School Date

Report any irregularities that may have occurred during the testing session on this form. You should list possible class disturbances, timing errors, problems with individual students faulty test booklets, etc.

If there is a problem with an individual student (such as his having to leave the room), please note the student's name so that we may identify his answer sheet if necessary.

If there were no irregularities, mark "NONE" on this page and return it with the tests, answer sheets, and directions.

Please use a second sheet for additional comments about the test or the way it was administered. This information will be used to improve the test and administration procedures.

OBJECTIVES BEING TESTED IN 1973

	TEST #:	OBJECTIVE #:	
MATH	1	1020	Consumer problems using fundamental operations
	2	1021	Graph and chart reading
	3	1001	Fundamental operations with natural numbers
	4	1003	Fundamental operations with fractions, decimals, and percents
	5	1005	Fundamental operations with real numbers
COMM. SKILLS	6	2032	Mechanics of writing
	7	2001	Listening comprehension
	8	2035	Understanding of reading
	9	2013,2014,2015	Parts of books and reference materials
	10	2019	Expository writing skills
SOC. ST.	11	4021	Understanding economic systems
	12	4023	Consumer rights and responsibilities
	13	4010	Appreciation of different cultures in New Mexico
	14	4027	Understanding written materials
SCIENCE	15	3015	Application of science
	16	3013	Growth and development of living things
	17	3014	Concepts of ecology
	18	3007	Differences: observation, hypothesis, theory, law, & prediction
CAREER EDUCATION	19	5004	Preparation for occupation or advanced training - skills appropriate for high school graduate: AUTO MECHANICS
	20	5004	Preparation for occupation or advanced training - skills appropriate for high school graduate: DISTRIBUTIVE EDUCATION
	21	5004	Preparation for occupation or advanced training - skills appropriate for high school graduate: AGRICULTURE
	22	5004	Preparation for occupation or advanced training - skills appropriate for high school graduate: HOME EC: TEXTILES & CLOTHING
	23	5004	Preparation for occupation or advanced training - skills appropriate for high school graduate: HOME EC: FOODS & NUTRITION
	24	5004	Preparation appropriate for high school graduate -OFFICE ED - SECRETARIAL
	25	5004	Preparation for occupation or advanced training - skills appropriate for high school graduate: OFFICE EDUCATION: CLERICAL
	26	5001	Personal and social significance of work
	27	5002	Make appropriate decisions about preparing for and selecing an occupation
	28	5003	Characteristics and requirements of different occupations
	29	5006	Important steps during high school to help make occupational decision
	30	5007	How to apply for a job
	31	5008	Requirements to hold a job and be advanced in an occupation

TO THE TEACHER:

If your students are interested as to why they are participating in this project, you might find the points listed below to be helpful:

TO THE STUDENT:

Your school is trying to determine how well it is meeting some of your academic needs. One of the best ways to do this is to ask you to respond to a number of questions in selected subjects.

The State Department of Education is interested not only in how you respond to these questions, but also how other students like you respond. Therefore, many other students around the state will be answering similar questions. Although you will receive no scores on these measures, your school will be provided information on how your group responded.

Your school is interested in providing better education for you. The results of your efforts today will be helpful in gathering information to make plans for a better school. Your best efforts are greatly appreciated.

* * * *

We thank you for your cooperation and support of this project.